

condemnation process in the event that the Service does not reach an agreement for acquisition of the full title. You can be sure that I will do all I can to assist in that undertaking, including seeking appropriation of the necessary funds.

I look forward to continue working with you and the other members of Colorado's delegation in the Congress to protect the Black Canyon of the Gunnison and to complete action on the legislation that will establish it as a National Park.

Sincerely,

MARK UDALL.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. UPTON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 323, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed a bill of the following title, in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 1637. An act to extend through the end of the current fiscal year certain expiring Federal Aviation Administration authorizations.

#### PROVIDING FOR MINERAL LEASING OF CERTAIN INDIAN LANDS IN OKLAHOMA

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 944) to amend Public Law 105-188 to provide for the mineral leasing of certain Indian lands in Oklahoma.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 944

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. MINERAL LEASING OF CERTAIN INDIAN LANDS IN OKLAHOMA.

Public Law 105-188 (112 Stat. 620 and 621) is amended—

(1) in the title, by inserting "and certain former Indian reservations in Oklahoma" after "Fort Berthold Indian Reservation"; and

(2) in section 1—

(A) by striking the section heading and inserting the following:

#### "SECTION 1. LEASES OF CERTAIN ALLOTTED LANDS.":

and

(B) in subsection (a)(1)(A), by striking clause (i) and inserting the following:

"(i) is located within—

"(I) the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation in North Dakota; or

"(II) a former Indian reservation located in Oklahoma of—

"(aa) the Comanche Indian Tribe;

"(bb) the Kiowa Indian Tribe;

"(cc) the Apache Tribe;

"(dd) the Fort Sill Apache Tribe of Oklahoma;

"(ee) the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes (Wichita, Keechi, Waco, and Tawakonie) located in Oklahoma;

"(ff) the Delaware Tribe of Western Oklahoma; or

"(gg) the Caddo Indian Tribe; and".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) and the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON).

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. SAXTON asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 944, legislation that would amend Public Law 105-188 to provide for the mineral leasing of certain Indian lands in Oklahoma.

Public Law 105-188 authorizes the Secretary of Interior to approve any mineral lease which affects an individually owned Indian tract of land within the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation in North Dakota if the majority of the Indian owners of the land consent and if the Secretary determines that the lease is in the best interest of the Indian owners. The lease would be binding on all owners of the leased tract, and all owners would share proportionally in the proceeds from the lease.

S. 944 would expand this law to include Indian lands within the former reservations of the Comanche, Kiowa, Apache, Fort Sill Apache, Wichita, Keechi, Waco, and Tawakonie Indian Tribes in Oklahoma.

S. 944 supersedes a 1909 law which requires unanimous consent before these individually owned Indian lands can be leased for oil or gas development. This is an almost impossible standard to meet because ownership of these lands has become very fractionalized over time. In one proposed project in Oklahoma, over 619 Indian owners have been identified, with more yet to come.

The resultant economic loss to individual Indian owners as well as to Indian tribes has been significant. S. 944 would facilitate oil and gas exploration on these individual Indian-owned lands, which will provide much needed funds for the Indian owners of these tracts.

Unanimous consent is not required for leases of other natural resources on Indian lands such as timber and hard rock minerals. The administration supports S. 944 as do all the Indian tribes specified in the bill.

I urge my colleagues to support passage of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mrs. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, S. 944 would permit the execution of mineral extraction leases on individual Indian trust lands when more than 50 percent of owners agree to the lease. This bill will only affect about 8 tribes in the State of Oklahoma.

Under current law, more than 50 percent of owners need to approve a lease for agriculture or forestry purposes; however, 100 percent of owners need to approve a lease for mineral exploration. Due to the century-old Federal allotment policy, Indian-owned parcels of land can have dozens or, as we have heard, even more than that of owners. In many cases, not all owners can be found, while others may be tied up in a lengthy probate process.

This bill was passed by the Senate in August of this year and is supported by the Department of Interior. The gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER), the senior Democratic member of the Committee on Resources, collected letters of support from each of the tribes whose members are included in this bill.

Similar legislation was passed last Congress with respect to mineral leases on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation in North Dakota, and I ask my colleagues to support passage of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS).

Mr. LUCAS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, as the House sponsor of this legislation, I rise in strong support of its passage. Simply put, this legislation will allow native American landowners to fully realize the benefits of their land.

Under current law, Indian lands possessed by more than one person will require the consent of 100 percent of the owners before mineral development can go forward. In many cases, this fractionated property is owned by more than 100 people. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, to locate all of the owners. Once found, potential developers must obtain their unanimous consent. As my colleagues can imagine, this has the effect of driving off development.

Last year, Congress lowered this requirement for the Three Affiliated Tribes of Fort Berthold Indian reservation for 50 percent. This brings the requirement in line with the regulations for non-Indian lands. Because of this, these tribes have seen development of many properties that were lying unused. This has been a great economic benefit to the reservation.

This bill will extend last year's legislation to seven Oklahoma tribes: the Comanche, Kiowa, Apache, Fort Sill Apache, Delaware, and the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes.

In Oklahoma, oil and gas development provides a significant part of the income that many Indian landowners receive. This legislation will have an